

December 16, 2016

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan:

On October 7, the Department of Homeland Security and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a joint statement regarding election security.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the statement described Russian-motivated efforts to “interfere with the US election process.” Recent media reports have further indicated that Central Intelligence Agency analysts have since concluded that the Russian activity was specifically intended to support the election of Donald Trump<sup>2</sup> and that Russian President Vladimir Putin personally directed the operation.<sup>3</sup>

As you have said, “any foreign intervention in our elections is entirely unacceptable.”<sup>4</sup> As the co-chair of the Congressional Cybersecurity Caucus, I am particularly concerned by the use of hacking to enable this information warfare campaign. I firmly believe that cybersecurity is the principle national security issue facing our country today, particularly because our nation’s pervasive use of information and communications technologies, while immensely beneficial to our economy, increases our risk. The use of cyber tactics to interfere with the election only heightens the urgency for Congress to address deficiencies in this space.

Unfortunately, Congressional oversight of the topic is fractured: At least eighty committees and subcommittees claim some jurisdiction over the issue across the House and Senate. The splintered nature of the oversight provided by Congress has not allowed us to act as nimbly as we need to in order to protect the nation from the fast-evolving cyber threat.

As we begin the 115th Congress, I encourage you to create a Select Committee on Cybersecurity to examine this issue. If properly empowered, a Select Committee could cut across jurisdictional lines to investigate pressing cybersecurity matters, starting with Russian interference with the election. The process of conducting such an investigation will also provide a blueprint for ways on which the House

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<sup>1</sup> Department Of Homeland Security and Office of the Director of National Intelligence (2016). *Joint Statement on Election Security*, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/10/07/joint-statement-department-homeland-security-and-office-director-national>

<sup>2</sup> Entous, Adam, Ellen Nakashima, and Greg Miller. “Secret CIA assessment says Russia was trying to help Trump win White House.” *The Washington Post*, December 9, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Arkin, William M., Ken Dilanian and Cynthia McFadden. “U.S. Officials: Putin Personally Involved in U.S. Election Hack.” *NBC News*, December 14, 2016. <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/u-s-officials-putin-personally-involved-u-s-election-hack-n696146>

<sup>4</sup> Speaker Paul D. Ryan (2016). *Statement on Cyber Threats*, <http://www.speaker.gov/press-release/statement-cyber-threats>

can effectively legislate and oversee cybersecurity policy going forward, whether within the existing committee structure or through more permanent revised jurisdictional organization.

Russian interference with the election exemplifies the breadth of the cybersecurity challenge facing the country. What started with the breach of a private organization has drawn in domestic security, foreign affairs, and the intelligence community. Policy questions ranging from the degree of federal involvement in securing elections to how to train a robust cybersecurity workforce are all implicated. As a veteran of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I have the utmost respect for the capability of the Committee members and staff; however, the breadth of the investigation will go far beyond the HPSCI's remit, and I would be concerned if it was the sole body to investigate this unprecedented incident within the House. A Select Committee avoids jurisdictional boundaries while still allowing for a single coordinated effort that can move quickly.

In my near decade focusing on cybersecurity policy, I have always been thankful for the bipartisan approach Members have taken toward addressing these challenges. I hope that you will maintain that paradigm going forward and that the House will act swiftly to address this grave national security threat.

Sincerely,

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JAMES R. LANGEVIN  
Member of Congress

cc: Hon. Nancy Pelosi